

**Lamoille North Supervisory Union and
Lamoille North Modified Unified Union District Board
Green Mountain Technology and Career Center
Minutes of Meeting
November 27, 2017**

Members Present: Belvidere: Angie Evans; Eden: David Whitcomb (Chair); Hyde Park: Andrew Beaupre, Lisa Barry, Chasity Fagnant; Johnson: Angela Lamell, Mark Nielsen, Bobbie Moulton, Katie Orost; Cambridge: Heather Hobart, Mark Stebbins, Sue Prescott, B. Sander, J. Sander

Members Absent: Jeff Hunsberger, Patti Hayford; Heather Rodriguez, Laura Miller, Amanda Tilton-Martin

Others Present: Catherine Gallagher, Deborah Clark, Michele Aumand, Jennifer Stevens, Jade Hazard, Brian Schaffer, Melinda Mascolino, Wendy Savery, Charleen McFarlane, Jan Epstein, Mary Anderson, David Manning, Brian Pena, Diane Reilly, Janet Murray, Lucy Boyden, Tyne Becholdt

Minute Taker: Sue Trainor

Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Public Comment: Chair Whitcomb called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Moulton made a motion to adopt the agenda, seconded by Nielsen. The motion passed unanimously. As part of the public comment, a large contingent of teachers, represented by Melissa Greenwood and Eric Hutchinson, were in attendance. Greenwood read the following statement:

“My name is Melissa Greenwood and I teach Music and am the Testing Coordinator at Johnson Elementary School and also serve as the co-president and lead teacher negotiator of the Lamoille North Unified Education Association. I am joined by co-president Eric Hutchinson, who teaches Social Studies at Lamoille Union High School and fellow lead negotiator Amy Tatro who teaches 6th Grade at Hyde Park Elementary School. My fellow members and I are here to urge you to work with us toward a contract settlement.

As you know, we’ve been working without a contract this school year. As you also know, despite many attempts for the last year, we have not been able to reach an agreement that does right by our schools, does right by our communities, is fair to us, and most importantly, is good for our students.

Every day, every single one of us comes to school for one reason: to teach the district’s children. Our entire professional lives are devoted to our students, and it’s a privilege to be entrusted with such an important job. It’s too bad that an unsettled contract is hanging over all of us, nearly four months into our school year.

We know that this year has thrown some unprecedented wrinkles into the bargaining process. But it’s frustrating to watch neighboring districts – including every single teachers’ contracts having settled in Chittenden County – work together to reach fair settlements. In fact, more than 85% of all contracts in the state are settled now, and every one of those districts and every one of those education associations faced the same issues we face.

We are here to urge you to take the opportunity when we meet again Wednesday to work with us until we reach an agreement on a contract. We are here to show our support of our negotiating team. We are here to demonstrate our unity for a negotiated settlement.

We are your friends and neighbors, and we know that you share our commitment to this district’s students. Let’s work together and reach a settlement, so that we can all focus solely on what we do best: teaching our children so that they will all have bright futures.”

LNSU/LNMUUSD Routine Business: Consent Agenda Items:

Minutes of the November 13, 2017, Meeting: Whitcomb asked that the minutes reflect that the meeting was held in Waterville, Vermont. Barry stated it was incorrectly reported that she had voted against the purchase of the JES plow truck. The Board then voted to approve the minutes.

Board Orders: Orost made a motion, seconded by Moulton, to approve the Board Orders. The motion passed unanimously.

LNSU

Central Office Presentation: Jade Hazard, Janet Murray, and Jen Stevens provided information to the Board on student growth trends. Hazard detailed the SBAC data for Grades 3-11, which was as follows:

LNSU Grade 3-11 in 2015: ELA: 46%; Math: 30%

LNSU Grade 3-11 in 2016: ELA: 51%; Math: 34%

LNSU Grade 3-11 in 2017: ELA: 52%; Math: 37%

Hazard stated incremental change was taking place and it was obvious that there needed to be a focus on math. Hazard then provided data on how these scores compared to the State of Vermont:

LNSU 2017 scores were ELA: 52%; Math: 37% as opposed to State of Vermont: ELA: 53%; Math: 43%.

Math fact fluency growth data in Grades 2-6 from the fall to the spring showed significant growth. The Fountas and Pinell reading growth showed incremental gains. Hazard explained that the middle and high school were using STAR Renaissance in grades 7-9 for their literacy program. STAR Renaissance was a computer adaptive assessment tool that had helped to increase student scores significantly.

Janet Murray then explained that the pre-K students, aged 3, 4 and 5, were assessed twice a year. There were six areas that were required to be reported to the Agency of Education: Cognitive, Social-Emotional, Language, Literacy, Mathematics, and Physical. The scores for 4 year olds increased significantly between the fall of 2016 and the spring of 2017. This was the first year that 4 year olds tested in the 90th percentile and above in all categories. Murray stated the number of Pre-K students had increased from 120 to 135. This was a result of having more 3 year olds come into the program. Additionally, last year the Pre-K Partner Program had 27 students. This year there were 47 students. Last year the partner programs were located in Stowe, Morrisville, Underhill, and Jericho. This year the program expanded into areas in Chittenden County. Unfortunately, the AOE and the AHS would not allow the District to condense the regional boundary. Gallagher had submitted a Geographical Boundary application but the State was no longer accepting those.

Murray then outlined the current collaborative work being done with Hazard and Stevens. This work included: redefining the multi-tiered system of support across the LNSU to ensure continuity for Pre-K through Grade 12; reviewing grading practices for students receiving special education services; building capacity within the schools to reduce the need for contracted services; providing Gold Training to all Kindergarten teachers across the District; and working with the Pre-K partners in Lamoille and Chittenden County. Murray noted that 20% of the students were receiving support outside of the classroom. One of the goals was to have all students get back into the classroom to receive instruction and they planned to strengthen the Tier 1 support system to accomplish that goal.

Stevens then outlined her goals as the Director of Student Services, one of which was to increase the capacity within the staff so that student needs could be met within the school. In August, functional behavioral assessment training had been conducted by in-house professionals to reduce the need for contracted services. The District then partnered with the Howard Center to provide professional development in cognitive assessments in order to reduce the need for this contracted service. In October, in-house professionals conducted weekly achievement test trainings with new staff. Recognizing that they needed to build capacity, Stevens was negotiating with the Stern Center to offer professional development on intensive reading instruction to special educators. Finally, Dr. Frank, a psychologist who provided training to staff on cognitive assessments, was also well versed on instruction in compassionate instruction and building the optimal classroom environment for those students who have experienced trauma. Stevens hoped to work with her next year.

Stevens stated the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators had been talking over the past year about grading practices specifically for those students who use special education services. What was clear was that in the early grades Exceptional learners received grades similar to other students. In the middle grades Exceptional learners received “modified grades” that inflated the grade and lowered their motivation. In the upper grades Exceptional learners earned low passing grades, placing them at the greatest risk for dropout. Stevens provided the Board with a flowchart that questioned if there was an appropriate expectation without adaptations and, if not, what kind of adaptation was needed. The idea was to change the standard to include appropriate skills for the student. The grade would be based on the modified expectation. They would use the same grading “ruler” as the rest of the class but on an appropriate standard. Some notes would need to be attached to the report card and transcript to communicate the meaning of the grade to the parents.

Stevens explained that there were some systems changes taking place. She explained there was now a new guideline for the consideration of paraeducator support. Students who exhibited behavioral or academic issues were often quickly referred to a paraeducator. This guideline would slow down the process by asking specifics on where the student needed support and what supports were currently in place for this student. She believed it was important to consider the least restrictive environment for the student. Placing the student with an adult was not always the best environment. Stevens also now had paraeducators complete a self-evaluation tool, outlining how they functioned with students and colleagues, and providing them with a way to ask for specific professional development. Finally, there was now a paraeducator evaluation for supervisors/principal to complete.

Hazard stated there had been a lot of systems change this year that had required a great deal of work and it could not have been done without the collaboration of colleagues/administrators. They were working on building equitable policies and practices to empower all learners. To that end, the District had partnered with Marzano Research, a leader in education. Marzano Research was assisting with developing policies and providing professional development to the K-12 staff. The Bridges Math Program was now being used in four out of five elementary schools, with Hyde Park implementing the program next year. A mathematics consultant was working in all the K-6 elementary schools in order to have a consistent practice across the district. As far as literacy, there was embedded professional development with a focus on writing taking place in all K-6 schools. Regarding science instruction, two district leaders went to a training this summer offered by the Vermont Science institute. They were now meeting with a group of teachers across the district to discuss the next generation science standards. The High School, Middle School and Tech Center faculty had been working diligently to implement proficiency-based learning. The work ahead would consist of refining performance indicators, proficiency scales and aligning assessments. They were in the process of prioritizing core standards and in the summer would begin updating their Pre-K offering.

B. Sander asked if there was a breakdown of each elementary school assessment results and how they compared. Hazard stated she could provide that information to Sander. B. Sander asked if there was much of a difference in the schools. Hazard stated at this time they were looking to provide equitable practices for all students. Hazard stated there might be some difference in the schools but they were working on minimizing the differences. B. Sander stated over the years there had been differences in students arriving for seventh grade from the sending schools, where students may come in with similar proficiencies but the level of training had not always been the same. He noted that every year he would hear everything was fine but he was concerned that it wasn't. He stated he believed it was important that there be common instruction among all the sending schools. Hazard stated that over the past two years they had been working on creating that consistency across the District. All schools were now receiving the same materials and the same professional development in order to have common language to use when teaching. There was now one math consultant teaching in all elementary schools, which had never happened before.

B. Sander asked if they were seeing a change in the middle school students. Hazard stated that because this was new, it would take a few years before it would show up in the arriving middle schools

students. Gallagher stated there had not been a common curriculum in the past. That change alone would propel the District the right way. Gallagher reminded the Board that the data showed that early education students, for the first time, were scoring 90% and above in all categories. Those were the students of the future and it was a continuum. Gallagher stated there wouldn't be monumental changes in the Middle and High School now but changes would be reflected in a few years.

Beaupre asked if the students currently being assigned a paraprofessional were being grandfathered into the program or was this decision made every year. Stevens stated a service couldn't be removed from an IEP unless the IEP team chose to do that. While she wanted students to know support was available, she didn't want students to have someone with them forever. She was encouraging educators to put a goal in place for independence. Fagnant asked if the parents and students were involved in the IEP plans. Stevens stated that parents were members of the IEP team and students were encouraged to be a part of it.

Central Office Report: Gallagher informed the Board that she and W. Savery were part of a group that visited the principal at Lake Region High School. This school had a greater number of students on free or reduced meal plans, a greater number of IEP's, a greater number of students experiencing poverty and homelessness, and a greater number of students from fractured families with little parental involvement. Despite this, their students were showing significant and impressive outcomes in academics and social/emotional wellbeing. The team wanted to know how they helped students to achieve these outcomes. 26% of their students were on IEP's and their primary disabilities were emotional disturbance and specific learning disabilities. The LNMUUSD had between 16% to 17% in any year and these students had incredibly intensive needs.

Gallagher noted that core values were posted in every room and hallway at Lake Region High School. Every student had a mentor and students were tasked with finding that person. Many students arrived at high school reading at a third grade level. Lake Region developed a three-hour daily Humanities Block, which included history, social studies and language arts. The focus was reading instruction in those content areas. Students experienced a yearly boost in reading of between three and four grade levels. Both regular and special education teachers taught these classes, with instruction in smaller groups. Students were also provided incentives when completing standardized tests. If students scored at a higher level they were excused from final exams in that particular area. Students and teachers developed that incentive collaboratively so there was buy-in. Seniors could also earn open campus privileges. Earning the privilege was meaningful to the students. Certain attendance rates or certain proficiency rates could earn the student that particular privilege. Students also helped craft what would remove those privileges.

Savery stated she was committed to the key transition from 6th to 7th grade and 8th and 9th grade. She had heard about the creative, compassionate programs Lake Region was developing for all students. Savery expressed her appreciation for an alternative program within the school that was a "communal home" for those students who were challenged being in a regular classroom due to depression, anxiety, or learning issues. This created a sense of belonging for students. This program also offered a hands-on program involving lots of projects that allowed students to demonstrate their skills. This fit in with personalized learning plans and proficiency based learning. There was also a communal home with a focus on life skills for students who were struggling with disabilities. Collaborations and relationships were important at the school. Savery noted that the principal started the transitioning process in late fall by visiting all the middle schools and getting a feel for what the incoming students needs were. Providing consistency, processing and getting to the root of the issue was the goal at the school.

Elementary Principal Updates:

Belvidere/Waterville: Epstein reported the math consultant was now working with the teachers. The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades had completed a unit on the olden days. Students developed terrific

representations of what life was like in Waterville 100 years ago. This was the culminating project following a tour of Shelburne Museum.

Cambridge: Anderson reported she was close to developing a service learning project with the North Country Animal League for 6th graders. Volunteer opportunities would include washing dishes, doing laundry, and being with animals. This was in keeping with the spirit of the community, which was to provide service to your community.

Eden: Mascolino reported there would be a community meeting/school celebration on Tuesday. She noted that the teachers recognized the need for Tier 1 professional development. The teachers had decided to participate together in lesson studies by collaborating and observing each other.

Hyde Park: Reilly provided the Board with a number of documents related to bed bugs, including the newly created bed bug protocol. She reported that on November 8th two bed bugs had been found on a student. Reilly reported that bed bugs were a nuisance but did not carry disease. Bed bugs were hitchhikers and could be carried into a building on backpacks, clothing and books. They were nocturnal and didn't like light or movement. The school was now storing student's belongings in totes and plastic bags. Reilly stated this was a community problem and she believed it was just the tip of the iceberg. This was not a socioeconomic issue, as those with the funds to travel could bring them home from hotels. Gallagher stated the most important thing was to educate people and to make sure not to overreact to the situation.

Johnson: Manning reported that parents had been dissatisfied with the amount of time they had to wait outside to pick up their students. A petition had been circulated. Manning then met with those who had signed the petition and a compromise was reached. Today was the first day the plan was put in place. Manning was pleased that the problem had been resolved successfully. He then shared that staff would be working with a professional development trainer next week on restorative practices at school.

Middle School, High School and GMTCC Principal/Director Updates:

Middle School: Savery informed the Board the Middle School had a full house on both nights of the parent teacher conferences. She stated they had been looking at data and trends on behavior. Four key trends of the current 7th graders were: a large number of latchkey kids; homelessness or moving often; extreme trauma; and, the biggest category, social/emotional challenges, such as social awkwardness or lack of empathy for others. The middle school would be focusing on developing ways to offer more support to those students experiencing social awkwardness.

High School: Schaffer stated that last year, in collaboration with the Central Office and a consultant, the school looked at what tasks needed to be completed to transition to a proficiency based graduation. The transition was creating some confusion, especially around expectations and requirements for graduation. It was difficult to build one system while moving out of another system. Schaffer stated the school was experiencing challenges with the Tier 1 level of instruction. He believed there needed to be a conversation about what the student needed to possess or accomplish to graduate. He noted that many districts were experiencing similar challenges. T. Becholdt then informed the Board that the Varsity Club was raising money for Christmas gifts for the Family Center. The Student Council dropped off their Food Drive Box. L. Boyden reported they had had a successful community movie night. She also reported they had a lockdown and practiced ALICE training. Schaffer stated the campus had been slowly implementing the strategies outlined in the ALICE training.

Green Mountain Tech and Career Center: Lussier discussed the partnership between the Tech Center and the High School. Lussier explained that when the Tech Ed teacher left several years ago, the principal had a difficult time finding a replacement. The Board tasked GMTCC and the High School to work together to provide training. The first class had learned electrical and construction skills and were now moving on to HVAC. Congressman Peter Welch recently visited and spoke to the students. Lussier reported that the student applications for the Tanzania trip were in and were being reviewed.

BNC Update: Prescott stated that both groups had received the Fact Finding report on November 15th, and the first available date to meet was this Wednesday. Prescott would report back with details following that meeting.

Subcommittee Reports: Clark reported that the Budget Committee had met on November 16th and selected Amanda Tilton-Martin as Chair. The objectives selected were: a) to maintain a student-centered budget process that allowed for board participation in the development of the budget and ensure that priorities were aligned with funding; b) adopt an annual budget that supported the work of the strategic plan; and c) identify cost savings and options for revenue generation. The committee would meet every Thursday at 5:30 p.m. from November 30th through January 4th, with the exception of December 28th. Tuition would be announced at the December 11th Board meeting. The initial budget presentation would be held on January 8th. There could then be a special meeting on January 15th for budget approval. There was no annual meeting scheduled at this time. The recommendation was to hold the annual meeting on February 19th, with the next option being February 26th. The Board would need to meet on January 15th if the annual meeting were held on February 19th. Informational meetings would follow, leading up to the Town Meeting Day on March 6th.

LNMUUSD

Board Pay: Clark explained there had been a question at the previous meeting about retroactive pay during the organizational period, prior to the February annual meeting when the actual pay was established. Clark stated that at the annual meeting there was no discussion of back pay prior to the March date when Board members' terms started. The other question involved when the Board payments should be issued. Checks were being processed for a December payout, unless the Board wanted to wait until the end of February which was the end of a member's term.

Orost stated she reviewed minutes and couldn't find anything about this issue, but she knew it was discussed and Board members were assured that they would be paid retroactively for the period of time from July 1, 2016 through February 2017, as well as March 2017 through February 2018. Orost made a motion to approve an eight-month pro-rated pay of \$871 for Board members and \$1,072 for the Chair and in March payment would be made for the term of March 2017 through February 2018. That would bring payment into line with a Board term. Moulton seconded the motion. Clark reiterated that the eight-month retroactive pay would be new pay as there was nothing specific in the minutes stating payment would be made. B. Sander stated he didn't believe the Board was entitled to retroactive pay and he wanted to see the payment stay on the December schedule. Stebbins stated that by Statute the Board was not entitled to retroactive pay unless the voters approved that payment. He noted this question should be brought up at the next annual meeting. B. Sander stated Stebbins was absolutely correct and he believed the motion needed to be ruled out of order. Beaupre agreed and asked for the citation in the Statute. Stebbins stated it was 16 V.S.A. § 562(5). Whitcomb stated this wouldn't have been an issue if the Legislature had done a better job. Orost stated she wanted to withdraw her motion. Clark clarified that payment would be made in December.

GMTCC Budget Presentation: Lussier explained that the Tech Center budget needed to be approved a month before the other budgets so that the sending schools could have the information for their budgets. The tuition of the sending schools was determined by using a formula that incorporated numbers from the Vermont Agency of Education. Formula numbers from the State were not expected until early December and because of changes in the Legislature she was unsure what the consequences might be if there were tax increases. There would be additional costs in this budget, including the Health Insurance "recapture", and some new maintenance costs for two satellite campuses.

Lussier explained that students came from Stowe, Craftsbury, Peoples, Hazen, and Lamoyille, with some students coming from Harwood and Milton. Last year the tuition increased \$150 per pupil and she anticipated it would be more than that this year. She noted that enrollment was declining for a variety of reasons. The average enrollment was 135, however, the number of full-time students currently was in the 120's. The larger items in next year's budget were:

Increase in teacher salaries: \$15,000
Recapture Health Insurance: \$18,000
Increase in Maintenance salaries: \$11,000

IT Equipment: \$18,000
Bond Principal: \$41,400

The FY 18 budget was \$3,394,131. The FY 19 budget was projected to be \$3,425,702, a difference of \$31,571 or 1%. Prescott asked if there would be any new programs offered or programs phased out. Lussier stated the Regional Advisory Board was supportive of the current programs and no new programs were being offered. McFarlane asked how many students were sent to other programs. Lussier stated one or two students a year went to Dental Hygiene or Cosmetology class elsewhere.

Eden Snow Removal and Plowing Services Bid: Clark stated they had received four bids for plowing and snow removal services. Sheldrick Excavating Services averaged out to be the same cost as D. Tatro Construction over the three-year period. D. Laflam had worked with Sheldrick and Facilities and Maintenance recommended the Board award the bid to them. Orost made a motion to approve the Administration's recommendation to award the contract to Sheldrick Excavating Services, seconded by Moulton. The motion passed unanimously.

Other Business: Evans stated her concern about plowing the turnaround for the bus in her community. Clark stated she would talk with the town's road crew.

Adjourn: Moulton made a motion, seconded by Nielsen, to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.