

LAMOILLE NORTH SUPERVISORY UNION BOARD MEETING
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2015
GMTCC COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTER

Board members present: Belvidere – Angie Evans; Cambridge – Jan Sander; Eden – David Whitcomb, Matt Mitchell, Jeff Hunsberger; Hyde Park – Dan Regan; Johnson – Katie Orost, Bobbie Moulton; LUSD #18 – Beth Bailey, Nita Bogart, Eve Gagne; Waterville – Becky Penberthy, Amanda Tilton-Martin. Others: Edith Beatty, Michelle Aumand, Marilyn Frederick, Catherine Gallagher, Joe Ciccolo, Brian Schaffer, Wendy Savery, Sherry Lussier, Diane Reilly, Kate Torrey, Mary Anderson, Janet Murray, Jane Krasnow, Harry Frank, Peter Ingvaldstad

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. ***Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Public Comment***

D. Whitcomb called the meeting to order at 6:02.

MOTION: B. Penberthy moved to approve the agenda, seconded by M. Mitchell. E. Beatty said the times may shift a little. The motion was passed.

2. ***Approval of Consent Agenda Items (Superintendent Evaluation Committee Minutes 9-10-15, Board Committee Minutes 8-24-15, Clerk's Report on Directors' Orders)***

MOTION: B. Penberthy moved to approve the Superintendent Evaluation Committee minutes of September 10, 2015 and the motion was seconded and passed.

MOTION: A. Tilton-Martin moved to approve the Board Committee minutes of August 24, 2015, M. Mitchell seconded and the motion was passed.

MOTION: A. Tilton-Martin moved to approve the clerk's report on directors' orders totaling \$184,539.60 and the motion was seconded and passed.

3. ***Secondary Schools Report – PLC Impact and New Work LUMS, LUHS, and GMTCC***

B. Schaffer said there was a report that came out in May of 2014 showing graduation rates vs. aspiration rates for different counties in Vermont. He showed data from that report. Lamoille County's graduation rate was 85.3% and our post secondary rate was 53.1%. That gave us pause. Why is there such a disparity between our graduation rate and our aspiration rate? What we will talk about tonight is a process put in place to address that. He showed our rates from 2009-10 to 2013-14. They were pretty stable during that period. We are starting to push the needle on getting students interested in not just completing high school but going on to pursue their interests and become gainfully employed after spending some time studying.

J. Krasnow of VSAC said the legislature was interested in increasing the aspiration rate in the state. They asked VSAC who might be a good recipient of grant funds. (*E. Gagne arrived at 6:11.*) They noticed that while the rate is going up slowly in LNSU there is a lot of room for improvement between the excellent graduation rate and the aspiration rate. VSAC approached Lamoille Union and said they would love to work with us. They created programs in partnership with LU. After the first year, when the findings were reported, the legislature liked what we did. We are now in the second year of receiving

grant funds for the program. VSAC met with community members, parents, teachers, students, school board members, business leaders, and representatives from higher education. They wanted as much input as they could get in order to find out what was working and what other initiatives would help increase the aspiration rate. They got a lot of data – student surveys given before and after each event, FAFSA completion data, college visit surveys, data shared by colleges, etc. They felt the student voice was important. In November they asked 9th-11th graders what they thought would be the highest level of education they would obtain. They asked this question again in a post survey. The number in grades 10 and 11 who said they just wanted a high school education went down. The number of 9th and 11th graders who wanted at least a 2 year degree went up. They asked seniors similar questions. They were pleased that in the post survey fewer seniors were undecided about their plans after high school. (*M. Anderson arrived at 6:15.*) There was a 5% increase in aspirations for last year's seniors. The percentage of parents who said they want their kids to do whatever they want to do went down. They were pleased because when parents give a clear message that they want their children to get a postsecondary education the aspiration rate goes up. Students who have high perseverance have been found to have higher post secondary aspirations. VSAC asked about students' connections to adults. Those who felt most connected to an adult had higher aspiration rates. The findings from the first year of the project helped them formulate an action plan for the second year. They are trying to build out parent engagement. Other goals include broadening exposure to various options and increasing "grit" (perseverance.)

B. Schaffer said we need a clearly defined curriculum and measures to assess progress and respond when student don't learn or already know the material. LUHS has completely revamped its curriculum in each content area. In each area of study there are learning targets which are measured by common assessments. We get into deeper levels of personalization in reinforcing the first round of learning, doing interventions, or pushing kids to set the bar higher. We have general and advanced curriculum but we have done away with the basic curriculum. Students can move up to advanced placement. Dual enrollment at JSC is an available option.

S. Lussier said students are assessed in many ways at the tech center. We expect them to learn in 3 ways: academics, program content and employability skills (which could be called transferable skills). They are assessed with the standardized tests all students take, state standardized tests for content areas, and industry-recognized certificate assessments. When they are not learning as fast as some peers the PLC does interventions. When students are getting it they are able to move on to co-ops and other enhanced and enriched curriculum.

W. Savery said one thing she is proud of is that in the 2 years she has been here she has been trying to build partnerships between elementary schools and the middle school, the middle school and the high school, the middle school and GMTCC, and the middle school and the boards. Perhaps the most important partnerships of all are between all the boards in LNSU, between boards and administrators and between boards and students. The partnerships we create among adults are important. It starts with all boards supporting the work we will talk about tonight. We are bridging our content area PLC work with

PLP's. We have common units, learning targets, and assessments. We are developing common expectations and scoring practices. We have multiple points of data (academic, attendance, behavior, work habits, student feedback, etc.) We have ways to respond when learning has not occurred or has already occurred.

Act 77 was passed in the spring of 2013. It relates to encouraging flexible pathways to secondary school completion and also PLP's. B. Schaffer said PLP's are required for grades 7 and 9 this year but Lamoille Union feels they are a positive thing so we are deploying them with all students, using an advisory model. At the end of November every student should have a personal learning plan identifying one academic and one future goal.

S. Lussier said at GMTCC all 10th graders do Career Cruising, which is similar to Naviance. Health students are examining careers. Student/parent/teacher meetings are being held this month to finalize PLP's. Career speakers have begun throughout the heavy tech programs as have career and college field trips. The Lamoille Valley Career and Job Fair was held here. Each program has an advisory board that makes sure the program is up to date and curriculum is what it needs to be.

W. Savery said work on PLP's is starting for all 7th graders and they have agreed to develop them for all 7th and 8th graders. In June a group developed a 3-year plan for PLP's. There will eventually be digital PLP's and digital portfolios. The middle school will start building toward proficiencies and becoming more relevant. Every student will develop goals in 3 areas - promoting a positive attitude, initiating action, and achieving academically. Their parents will be involved in the process. In the third year, digital PLP's and portfolios will be implemented. Students will be working on transferable skills. W. Savery recently asked teams what they are concerned about. The word they all used was "apathy." By starting a journey toward proficiencies and not just seat time in a class she hopes to get students more engaged. Transferable skills include clear and effective communication, self-direction, problem solving, citizenship, and informed and integrative thinking.

LUMS currently has partnerships with the Tarrant Institute for Innovative Education and the Rowland Foundation. One teacher has a Rowland Foundation fellowship focused on game-based learning and digital portfolios. Another partnership with the A World of Difference Institute will provide training for some students on bias, bullying, harassment, hazing, and promotion of respect, inclusiveness and civility. We are also partnering with VSAC.

B. Schaffer said we have a great school and a great system. To continue to push kids into community opportunities we need good community partners. He listed community partners we work with such as the Lamoille Restorative Center and the Lamoille Family Center.

J. Krasnow said this fall E. Beatty and J. Hazard took her to meet the elementary school principals. VSAC is going to do workshops for parents. There will be a Maker Faire in

Eden. Another idea is a storytelling afternoon where students and parents share their stories, hopes and dreams. This year for the first time there were career workshops at the high school tying in with the job fair at GMTCC. VSAC intends to go where parents are. They are organizing some parent/student athlete meetings. Wherever there are groups of parents and students they would like to be there reinforcing the idea that there is so much students can do.

W. Savery said it is clear we are in an era where we are trying to use data to inform our practices and examine results, not intentions. We have a commitment to common practice and expectations and we hope to work together in collaboration.

D. Regan said he wants to underline for the board the importance of the work being done on raising post secondary aspiration and continuation rates. The gap between the high school graduation rate and the post secondary continuation rate is interesting but what is even more puzzling and important is that the low rate in Lamoille County can't be explained by the usual socioeconomic and educational background factors. There are other areas in the state with lower socioeconomic status and lower parental education but higher aspiration and continuation rates.

4. Act 46 Update

E. Beatty introduced Peter Ingvaldstad, chair of the Act 46 committee. P. Ingvaldstad said he thinks we are on to some very important work. It is early and there is not a lot to report yet. Tomorrow's Act 46 committee meeting is going to be about setting the agenda for the rest of the period in which the committee will be investigating Act 46. They are considering the potential of being on the fast track for Act 46. We may not be ready for that. There will be a lot of discovery tomorrow to find out if we will be able to do that. Pierre Laflamme is the vice chair.

M. Mitchell said he thinks everyone is open to all the possibilities. We are going to try to keep the community informed as much as possible, not just posting minutes but answering their questions and hearing their concerns.

P. Ingvaldstad said board members should go back to their boards and help set up forums at each school. The committee was hoping each forum would be on a board meeting night in October or November. They plan to get around to each community. To do what needs to be done in time for the accelerated path we will need the support of all the towns. At tomorrow's Act 46 committee meeting he hopes to get all resistance to Act 46 and consolidation on the table so the committee can look at each issue and then look at them in the community forums to see if we can overcome those issues. For example if everyone feels we are losing a sense of community that will be a problem. We need to come up with ways we can still keep a sense of community with consolidation.

E. Beatty said there were nice articles in the News & Citizen after all 6 boards voted to form a study committee and after the first meeting of the committee. The only member of the public at the committee meeting was one of our assistant principals. It is going to be the electorate that will make this decision. We need to get creative about how to get them involved. Steve Dale told us this isn't about getting a majority, it is about getting consen-

sus. Those at the committee meeting were impressed with P. Ingvaldstad, who respected the voices of everyone in the room but stuck to the agenda and politely moved everyone on.

P. Ingvaldstad said he thought he could do a good job as chair because he was involved in the choice of whether to build a middle school here or a high school/middle school in Cambridge. He was involved in forums about that question. He remembers a lot of public involvement. His hope is that we can have the same kind of community involvement this time.

D. Whitcomb suggested that people watch the Stowe Reporter and News & Citizen for news about Act 46. He would like to see people from the newspapers at the meetings. All the newspapers are doing stories on this. He doesn't want to rush on this. He thinks we need to take it slower and forget the carrot because people don't understand it, including the legislators who voted for it.

5. Act 166 Update

E. Beatty introduced Cat Gallagher and Janet Murray. She said when we last talked about preschool expansion AoE was letting us put the work on hold because we didn't have the time and guidance we needed to work on it. Since then we have been working on it.

C. Gallagher said Act 166 is about providing quality education for all 3 and 4 year olds in the state of Vermont. Research shows that the earlier we intervene and give access the better students do to age 12 and beyond. Janet Murray is helping spearhead the work on implementing Act 166. She thinks we need to move conservatively and thoroughly. J. Murray will explain why.

J. Murray said guidance has been coming to us from the state in parts over the last 8 months. Last week she learned there are now rules approved by the State Board of Education. Next final approval is needed by the Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules. Hopefully that will be the final word. C. Gallagher said one reason she and J. Murray will recommend not accelerating the process is that we still don't have the final rules.

J. Murray said the school board can propose to limit the geographic area within which it will pay \$3K in tuition for preK education by establishing a prekindergarten region. Applications to establish a region must include a clearly defined region, the rationale for the region and dates and summaries of public meetings about the region, including copies of the warnings for the meetings. Final approval comes from the Agencies of Education and Human Services in consultation with the requesting school board, private prequalified providers, parents and guardians of preschool children and other interested parties (Building Bright Futures, Lamoille Family Center, Headstart, etc.) The application process includes a public hearing on the proposed region and acceptance of written comments. Applications are due by November 15 each year. A consultant suggested that we be carefully and not hurry up and apply for a region. C. Gallagher said the rules should be approved next week and the deadline for requesting a region is just over a month later. That doesn't give us much time. A preK region cannot be smaller than the geographical boundaries of the school district. It should be based in part on estimated numbers of preK children re-

siding in the district and bordering districts and availability of public and private preschools and should support existing partnerships. If parents can't access a preschool within the approved region, they can ask for their child to attend preschool in a different region. Approval of a preK region will be for a period of 3 years but a district can resubmit after one year if they want changes.

J. Murray showed for each district in LNSU the numbers of preschool children in 2015-16 and projections for 2016-17. The projections look really high. One reason is that a lot of the data comes from town clerks and is based on the number of births. Not all families participate in preschool. Some want to wait until their child is 4 or (more rarely) until they are old enough for kindergarten. Transportation is a big barrier for working families. C. Gallagher said in Hyde Park and Johnson we have a lot of move ins and move outs, so we don't have reliable predictions of how many 3 and 4 year old students will live in the towns.

B. Penberthy mentioned that Waterville transports its preschoolers.

J. Murray said we don't currently have any eligible partners. Round Hill Kids doesn't have a certified teacher in early ed, which is one of the requirements. Mary Elizabeth opted not to participate. Some preschools are opting not to participate for financial reasons. There are 4 eligible preschools Lamoille South, all in Morrisville.

J. Murray said according to the state's suggested timeline we should decide in October whether to apply by mid-November for a geographic region.

C. Gallagher said we have some information about early adopters. They are concerned that some of the qualified providers in their towns are raising fees for child care and some families are requesting \$3K cash for tuition. That is not the intent of the law. Early adopters are not building capacity in their own schools, which we think is always the way to go first. They are not looking thoughtfully at how this will play out over time.

M. Mitchell said he thinks it would be great to build capacity but if we aren't providing transportation, some kids could be missing out if we can't get money to their daycare providers to help those kids.

C. Gallagher said we are not required to provide transportation but it is recommended that we do that if there are some prequalified providers. But we don't have any prequalified providers. If we apply, AoE will say no because we aren't partnering with anyone. One thought is that we can use this year to see what our requests are. There have been none so far this year. Last year we had 4 requests. Act 166 goes into effect next year but we don't have to determine a geographical boundary at this point. J. Murray said a consultant cautioned that a school providing transportation for 4 year olds should also consider providing it for 3 year olds, but that is a problem because she understands that they can't be transported by bus.

C. Gallagher said there is an FAQ sheet for board members. Board members can write down any questions and they will answer within one week. She and J. Murray are suggesting at this point that we don't designate a geographic boundary. Whether we have a boundary or not we have to pay the \$3K in tuition if we get a request.

M. Anderson asked when a geographical boundary needs to be established. J. Murray said we can apply every November if we choose to. There is no deadline. M. Anderson asked if they are suggesting establishing one in November. J. Murray and C. Gallagher said no, just the opposite. M. Anderson asked why. J. Murray said a state consultant recommends a thoughtful approach and not rushing into it. The typical number of requests across the state ranges from 2 to 6. C. Gallagher said we need to recognize that some of our schools are under-enrolled. It makes sense to start first with building capacity in our elementary schools.

K. Orost said each individual school board should vote. When should that be done by? C. Gallagher said we don't have to worry about it before November 15 if we choose not to establish a boundary. Maybe over the next year we can encourage some providers to become approved. Based on the number of requests for transfers out maybe we will never want to establish a boundary.

J. Hunsberger asked about possible providers. J. Murray said Mary Elizabeth Preschool is one, but they chose not to participate. Round Hill Kids would qualify if they had a licensed teacher. They may not get one because of the expense, but we may want to nurture that one. J. Hunsberger asked if we have data on the number of preschools out there and how many they are serving now. J. Murray said we have some data and we want to get more. Many preschools don't qualify. They need 4 stars and a licensed teacher.

6. BNC

E. Beatty said the BNC for teacher negotiations recently met. There is not much substantive news. Both sides have put a lot across the table. J. Hunsberger said the teachers will be meeting soon. When the BNC met with them, our team put a lot across the table to clarify and get feedback. They weren't in a position to provide feedback. Hopefully there will be more communication back and forth next time.

7. Superintendent Evaluation

D. Regan said at the last LNSU board meeting 3 board members volunteered to serve on a superintendent evaluation committee – he, J. Hunsberger, and J. Sander. On September 10 they met with Charleen McFarlane, who volunteered from the administrative side, and with Harry Frank. J. Sander couldn't make it to that meeting but she and H. Frank spoke before the meeting. They started off the meeting reflecting on some big questions regarding the superintendent evaluation. Why do we want to do it? What kinds of outcomes do we see flowing from it? The members of the committee arrived at 4 areas of agreement. They each embraced a vision of a growth model for the evaluation – a process that would not just give a thumbs up or thumbs down but would support continuous improvement. They agreed that two work plans should come out of the evaluation – one for the superintendent and one for the board in the direction of continuous improvement. They agreed that it is the board that does the evaluation. The board will entertain feedback or perspectives from a variety of constituent groups like administrators or principals. They agreed

that the evaluation will revolve around 5 dimensions: board priorities for the superintendent's performance; educational leadership; relations with school boards, personnel administration, and the connection between the superintendent and staff; business and finance; and community relations.

J. Sander said between now and March the committee wanted to examine the purpose of the evaluation and intended outcomes, map expectations from LNSU documents (criteria we used in the superintendent search, LNSU goals, etc.), decide what will be on the survey sent out and who will be asked to respond to it, decide on how to put these items together into the survey, do the survey, collect and collate the feedback. When surveys go to people it will be clear that the survey is not the actual evaluation but feedback to use when the board evaluates the superintendent. The committee will work with the superintendent to come up with a work plan.

J. Hunsberger said the committee is still looking at evaluation tools that have been used in the past. They thought they would lay out our values and what we want to accomplish and work from that to build the tool. This will be an opportunity to get a large amount of information from constituents and synthesize it, then work with the superintendent on her strengths and any areas of concern.

D. Whitcomb asked when the committee's next meeting is. H. Frank said it is not scheduled. He said there is a good deal of relevant research. One of his jobs is to provide any helpful background information.

8. ***Business Manager Search Process***

E. Beatty said she received M. Frederick's formal resignation letter today. By state statute the superintendent appoints the business manager, but she knows how important this position is to all the boards and to everyone in central office and the other administrators. She is committed to doing a rigorous, participatory, open, transparent process. She has been talking to other superintendents and business managers to get a sense of best practices. The job description has grown a lot since it was last written. When looking for a principal or superintendent, we want to get out early. For a business manager there are a lot of considerations. If we want to tap people in business, they don't operate on our schedule. They can't tell their current place of business in November that they have a new job starting July 1. The search will resemble the superintendent and tech center director searches. We will post the position with as much detail as we can. We will have screening and interview committees, open forums, visits to the person's workplace and visits here by the candidates. She handed out copies of M. Frederick's resignation letter.

9. ***Budget Schedule, Financial Audit in Process***

M. Frederick said she had sent out a budget timeline and assumptions for FY17. Important assumptions include an 8% increase in health care premiums and a 10% increase for other insurance. We know what the support staff salary increase will be. We don't know the increase for other staff. She put in a 3.1% for support staff and 2.9% for others. She listed the Act 46 caps for each district in the form of cost per pupil.

Town meeting day is early this year – March 1. We won't have a lot of time. There are a lot of things happening that will influence the budget. It will be a tough budget develop-

ment. Negotiations and Act 46 will influence it. We still haven't centralized in accordance with Act 156. That needs union agreement. This is a very unique time period to develop budgets. There are more unknowns than a typical year.

M. Frederick said the auditors have concluded their on-site review. They say it went well. She gave a presentation on the board's fiduciary responsibility regarding the audit. Financial oversight is a fundamental duty of elected board members. Public funds are entrusted to the board and to central office and administrators through the board. The board has these duties:

- a duty of care – to act in good faith and exercise reasonable care and diligence
- a duty of loyalty – to avoid conflicts of interest and act in good faith with the interest of the institution in mind.
- a duty of obedience – to insure that the institution's resources are dedicated to the fulfillment of its mission

She listed applicable sections of 16 VSA and state board rules. The board is also guided by the Handbook for Financial Accounting of Vermont School Systems and by the auditor.

She listed 5 actions the board is responsible for:

- Assure a culture of care and concern for the financial resources of the districts and the SU
- Establish policy
- Assure adequate internal controls (back-up for expenditures and liabilities)
- Conduct financial monitoring
- Be a good consumer of the annual audit

She will talk in a future presentation about what to look for in the audit.

Some factors that help the board fulfill its duties:

- Board policy
- Building and managing a budget
- Authority of the superintendent to spend dollars within the budget
- Limits on the superintendent to spend dollars as new revenues are available
- Limits on ability to incur debt
- Limits on transfers between line items
- Rules related to bidding
- Guidance on financial reporting to the board

Internal controls are a system of checks and balances to prevent improprieties and allow errors to be found and corrected. No two systems of internal controls are identical. Internal controls allow an organization to safeguard assets and ensure accuracy and reliability

of accounting records. By statute school boards have the power to establish and maintain a system for receipts, deposits, disbursements, accounting, control and reporting procedures that meets criteria established by the State Board. The school board's role in internal control is to establish an accounting and control system to safeguard assets and reflect the district financial position and to approve the orders. The board can authorize a subcommittee, superintendent or employee to approve orders.

Title 16 VSA Section 242a was new last year. It says that annually on or before December 31 the superintendent or designee must complete and provide to the SU board and all member district boards a copy of the document regarding internal financial controls and that the state auditor will provide a form to be used for this purpose. M. Frederick showed a snapshot of the form. She will give out one for the current year by December 31. It will be similar to last year's.

10. *Superintendent's Report*

The BNC will meet October 19 without teachers and October 29 with everyone. There could be an executive committee meeting on October 26. She will work with D. Whitcomb to discuss what the executive committee could do then.

11. *Adjourn*

MOTION: It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 7:56 and the motion was passed.

Respectfully submitted by,
Donna E. Griffiths

Actions taken at the LNSU Board 9-28-15:

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MOTION: B. Penberthy moved to approve the agenda, seconded by M. Mitchell. The motion was passed.

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